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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/049,948	06/04/2002	Wolfgang Schmidbauer	WEI0032	2549
7590	04/18/2005		EXAMINER	
John F Hoffman Baker & Daniels Suite 800 111 East Wayne Street Fort Wayne, IN 46802			HALPERN, MARK	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1731	
			DATE MAILED: 04/18/2005	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/049,948	SCHMIDBAUER ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Mark Halpern	1731	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 January 2005.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 21-34 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) 21-34 is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1) Acknowledgement is made of Amendment received 1/21/2005. Applicants amend claim 26.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

2) Claims 21-34, are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-18, of U.S. Patent No. 6,588,234. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both the present application and the patent disclose a device and method of melting glass or ceramic materials in a melting vessel bottom connected to a skull crucible, then after refining connecting the materials flow via groove duct to another vessel equipped with a stirrer.

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3) Claims 26-34, are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-17, of U.S. Patent No. 6,810,689. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both the present application and the patent disclose a method of melting glass or ceramic materials in a melting vessel bottom connected to a skull crucible, then after refining connecting the materials flow via groove duct to another vessel equipped with a stirrer.

4) Claims 21-25, are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20, of U.S. Patent No. 6,577,667. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both the present application and the patent disclose a device for melting glass or ceramic materials in a melting vessel bottom connected to a skull crucible, then after refining connecting the materials flow via groove duct to another vessel equipped with a stirrer.

Allowable Subject Matter

5) The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

The primary reason for indicating allowable subject matter is that the cited prior art does not disclose: an apparatus that includes a melting vessel connected to a refining vessel which is a skull crucible and having a leak-proof glass seal located at a connection to the refining vessel, wherein the seal is electrically shunted to ground

potential (claim 21); a method of melting and refining of inorganic compounds, where the melting is done in a melting vessel at a temperature range claimed, and then the melt is refined in a connecting refining vessel, followed by the refined melt flowing via a cooling groove to a stirring crucible (claim 26).

Response to Amendment

- 6) Cross-Reference to Related Applications is accepted.
- 7) Claims 24, 26-34, rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is withdrawn in view of amended claim.
- 8) Claims 21-23, 25, rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tachibana Masakiyo (JP 57 095 834) in view of Lifanov, is withdrawn.
- 9) Claim 24 rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tachibana in view of Lifanov, and further in view of Murakami (6,250,111), is withdrawn.
- 10) Claims 26-34, rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tachibana in view of Murakami, is withdrawn.

Conclusion

- 11) Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark Halpern whose telephone number is 571-272-1190. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steven Griffin can be reached on 571-272-1189. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Mark Halpern
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1731